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AISC

# Argentine Information Service Center

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ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

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Secretary of State Cyrus Vance  
Department of State  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Vance:

In November of 1977, the Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy transmitted to you a list of 7,500 names of victims of persecution in Argentina. Representing United States concern for human rights in that country, you took the list, compiled by the Argentine Information Service Center, to Argentina that month.

The response of the Argentine government was cosmetic. It published lists totalling approximately 2,000 names, most of which belong to persons recognized as prisoners under the administration of former President Isabel Martinez de Peron.

In a previous superficial response to national and international pressure, the Junta restored an extremely limited version of the "right of option," which allows prisoners held under State of Siege regulations to opt to leave the country for exile rather than remain in prison. The Junta has reserved the right to decide in each option case whether or not the release of a given prisoner would "endanger national security" - the justification in most cases for having detained the person in the first place under State of Siege regulations.

According to Justice Carro and Attorney Herbert Semmel - who visited Argentina last January as part of an international fact finding mission - the violations of human rights in Argentina have not abated. Justice Carro reported that despite a superficial appearance of normalcy on the streets of Buenos Aires, each person he met had lost a friend, a colleague, a neighbor, or a loved one to abduction, detention, or death. Furthermore, the conditions in the prisons continue to deteriorate. The uprising at Villa Devoto Prison, last March 14, where upon 61 prisoners were killed and many more seriously injured, is evidence of the critical situation.

As the violations of human rights have mounted, the number of names on the list of victims has grown. AISC requires that there be a minimum of two

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independent sources for each name on its list. Even with that criterion the list has now grown to 10,000 names by the second anniversary of the coup. We submit this list to you and request that you convey it on behalf of the United States to representatives of the Government of Argentina as a sign of our awareness and continuing concern about the human rights situation in that country.

We feel that international pressure, particularly from the United States Government, can influence the extent to which the Argentine military feels compelled to fulfill its own commitments and to give substance to its widely-publicized moves to restore respect for human rights in that country. It is for these reasons that we urge you at this time to make public once again the Administration's concern on these matters and to encourage the Videla government to comply with the following requests:

1. That the Argentine government make public a complete list of all those it holds in detention, and that it provide a complete accounting of persons missing or disappeared since the present Junta came to power;
2. That the Argentine government allow those being held under State of Siege regulations to leave the country for exile as guaranteed by the Argentine Constitution, without restrictions;
3. That the Argentine government provide safe passage for those who have sought refuge in foreign embassies and allow them to leave for the country of their choice; of particular concern is the case of former President Dr. Hector Campora, who has been forced to remain inside the Mexican Embassy in Buenos Aires since the military coup of March 1976;
4. That the Argentine government begin the process of restoring democratic rule by lifting the ban on political parties and their activities, as a necessary prerequisite to holding free general elections in the near future.

We believe that the above are the basic criteria for judging any changes in the human rights situation in Argentina, and should be a precondition for improving U.S. - Argentine relations.

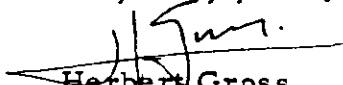
As long as the violations of human rights continue unabated in Argentina, we urge that the United States deny any financial assistance to the Junta, whether direct or indirect. The United States abstention - as opposed to a negative vote - on Argentina's recent request for \$105 million in credits from the World Bank belies our country's original firm stance on such credits to countries which violate human rights.

We welcome the Attorney General's recommendation for a parole visa program for Argentine prisoners, and we urge that it be implemented without delay.

Hoping that you will consider and accept these recommendations intended

to contribute to the prompt restoration of democracy in Argentina, we remain

Very truly yours,

  
Herbert Gross

  
Madeline Eisner

AISC/ss

Enclosure: List of 10,000 names

cc Mr. Mark Schneider

Mr. Jim Bumpus